In the Claims:

Please amend the claims by deleting the text shown as strikethrough and adding the text shown in underline.

Claims 1-36 (Cancelled)

37. (Currently Amended) The use of a saposin-related product and/or a modulator/effector thereof ~~for the manufacture of a medicament~~ to promote the protection, survival and/or regeneration of insulin producing cells comprising administering to the cells of a patient in need thereof an effective amount of a saposin-related product and/or a modulator/effector thereof.

38. (Original) The use of claim 37, wherein the insulin producing cells are beta-cells.

39. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37 ~~or 38~~, wherein the insulin producing cells are of mammalian origin, preferably of human origin.

40. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37 ~~any one of claims 37-39~~, wherein the insulin producing cells have been transfected with a pancreatic gene, particularly the Pax4 gene.

41. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37 ~~any one of claims 33-40~~ for the prevention or treatment of a disease going along with impaired beta-cell function, particularly for the treatment of beta-cell degeneration in patients suffering from diabetes type I, LADA, or progressed diabetes type II, or for the prevention of beta-cell degeneration in patients at risk to develop beta-cell degeneration, like for example but not limited to patients suffering from diabetes type I or II, or LADA in early stages.

42. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37 ~~any one of claims 33-41~~, wherein a saposin-related product or a modulator/effector thereof that influences the expression level or function of a saposin-related product is administered to a patient

(i) as a pharmaceutical composition e.g. enterally, parenterally or topically directly to the pancreas,

(ii) via implantation of saposin-related protein product expressing cells, and/or

(iii) via gene therapy.

43. (Original) The use of claim 42, wherein the saposin-related product or modulator/effector thereof is administered in combination with another pharmaceutical composition useful to treat beta-cell degeneration, for example but not limited to hormones, growth factors, or immune modulating agents.

44. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37 ~~any one of claims 33-43~~, wherein the saposin-related product is a protein including purified natural, synthetic or recombinant saposin-related products and variants thereof.

45. (Original) The use of claim 44, wherein the saposin-related product is of mammalian origin, preferably human origin, more preferably selected from proteins or peptides substantially homologous to the human saposin-related precursor proteins as shown in Table 2.

46. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37 ~~any one of claims 33-45~~, wherein the saposin-related product is a nucleic acid, e.g. RNA and/or DNA encoding a saposin-related protein product.

47. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37 ~~any one of claims 33-46~~, wherein the differentiation of progenitor, e.g. stem cells into insulin-producing cells in vitro comprises

a) optionally activating one or more pancreatic genes in progenitor cells,

b) optionally aggregating said cells to form embryoid bodies,

c) cultivating said cells or embryoid bodies in specific differentiation media containing saposin-related protein product and

d) identifying and optionally selecting insulin-producing cells.

48. (Original) The use of claim 47, wherein the saposin-related treated insulin producing cells are
(i) capable of a response to glucose and/or
(ii) capable of expressing glucagon.

49. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 47 ~~any one of claims 47-48~~, wherein the saposin-related insulin producing cells are capable of normalizing blood glucose levels after transplantation into mice.

50. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37 ~~any one of claims 33-49~~, wherein an effective amount of in vitro saposin-related cells are transplanted to a patient in need.

51. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37 ~~any one of claims 33-50~~, comprising a stimulation of saposin-related expression,
wherein cells from a patient in need that have been modified to produce and secrete a saposin-related protein product in vitro are re-implanted into the patient and/or
wherein cells of a patient in need are modified to produce and secrete a saposin-related protein product in vivo.

52. (Original) A method for differentiating or regenerating cells into functional pancreatic cells, the method comprising: (a) cultivating cells capable of being differentiated or regenerated into pancreatic cells in the presence of an effective amount of a saposin-related protein in vitro (b) allowing the cells to develop, to differentiate and/or to regenerate at least one pancreatic function; and (c) optionally preparing an effective amount of the differentiated or regenerated pancreatic cells for transplantation into a patient in need thereof, particularly a human individual.

53. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein the patient in need has (a) functionally impaired, (b) reduced numbers and/or (c) functionally impaired and reduced numbers of pancreatic cells.

54. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 52 ~~any one of claims 52-53~~, wherein said patient in need is a type I diabetic patient or type II diabetic patient or LADA patient.

55. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 52 ~~any one of claims 52-54~~, wherein the pancreatic cells are insulin-producing cells.

56. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 52 ~~any one of claims 52-55~~, wherein the pancreatic cells are beta-cells of the pancreatic islets.

57. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 52 ~~any one of claims 52-56~~, wherein the cells in step (a) are selected from embryonic stem cells, adult stem cells, or somatic stem cells.

58. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 52 ~~any one of claims 52-57~~, wherein the cells in step (a) are of mammalian origin, preferably human origin.

59. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 52 ~~any one of claims 52-58~~, wherein the protein is added at concentrations between 1 ng/ml and 500 ng/ml, preferably between 10 and 100 ng/ml, more preferably at about 50 ng/ml.

60. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 52 ~~any one of claims 52-59~~, wherein the at least one pancreatic function is selected from insulin production in response to glucose and expression of glucagon.

61. (Original) A method for differentiating or regenerating cells into functional pancreatic cells, the method comprising: preparing an effective amount of a saposin-related product

or of cells capable of expressing a saposin-related product for administration to a patient in need thereof.

62. (Original) The method of claim 61, wherein the saposin-related product is a protein or a nucleic acid.

63. (Original) The method of claim 61, wherein cells have been modified to produce and secrete a saposin-related protein product and are prepared for transplantation into a suitable location in the patient.

Claims 64-82 (Cancelled).